

WASHINGTON D.C. — Today, Congressman Walz voted for the final version National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2010 which authorizes retroactive payments to National Guard soldiers in Minnesota and elsewhere who have been deployed beyond established Department of Defense rotation cycles.

“These brave soldiers have gone above and beyond the call of duty. We owe them the benefits they have earned and I am pleased that the House took this significant step today by including this authorization,” said Walz. “I have been fighting hard to fix this bureaucratic snafu, and I am pleased that the House has taken an important step today to make sure these payments get to our brave men and women in uniform.”

The NDAA that passed the House today also included an amendment Congressman Walz introduced on the floor that would require the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to submit to Congress a report on the progress that has been made on the establishment of a Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record for members of the Armed Forces to improve the quality of medical care and create a seamless transition between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“The President announced on April 9 of this year that his Secretary of Defense and Secretary of VA would be working toward establishing a Joint Virtual Lifetime Record, which is absolutely key to making sure our returning service members make a more seamless transition when they become civilians again,” said Walz. “I was very pleased when the President made that announcement. But I am a firm believer in congressional oversight, and that is what my amendment does. It is what we owe our soldiers and our veterans.”

### ***The NDAA will:***

#### **Provide Needed Military Equipment and Training for Our Troops**

\*Authorizes \$11 billion to address the Army’s equipment reset requirements in FY 2010, and \$1 billion to address the equipment reset needs of the Marine Corps. This will enable the two services to address their critical shortfalls of equipment.

\*Provides \$4.7 billion for training opportunities for the Army

\*Provides \$255.3 million to refill and maintain prepositioned stocks to help prepare for any future contingencies

\*Adds \$350 million for Army trainee barracks construction and \$200 million to support National Guard and Reserve military construction projects

\*Adds \$70 million for the Navy’s top unfunded requirement, aviation depot maintenance

#### **Build up the Strained National Guard and Reserve**

\*Authorizes \$6.9 billion for the procurement of critical, high-priority equipment for the National Guard and Reserve. The funding is specifically provided to address critical unfunded equipment shortfalls of the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve.

#### **Ensure Our Troops in Harm’s Way Have the Protective Equipment They Need**

\*Provides \$6.7 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, \$1.2 billion above the President's request, which fully funds the new MRAP All-Terrain variant requirement for Afghanistan.

\*Authorizes \$2.1 billion for the work of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDD), which develops better technologies for defeating IEDs.

### *Supporting Our Troops and Their Families*

#### Give the Military a Pay Raise

\*Provides all service members a pay raise of 3.4 percent -- 0.5 percent more than the President's budget request.

#### Improve Health Care for Our Troops & Military Retirees

\*Retroactively prohibits fee increases on TRICARE inpatient care for one year. The Defense Department recently announced TRICARE fee increases, including a \$110-a-day increase in inpatient hospitalization charges for military retirees and their families.

\*Expands TRICARE health coverage to reserve component members and their families for 180 days prior to mobilization, instead of just 90 days.

#### Improve Family Support for Military Families

\*Provides \$2.2 billion for family housing programs and requires DOD to review the current standards used to calculate the monthly rates for basic allowance for housing.

\*Adds \$276 million to support the Housing Assistance Program that helps service members forced to sell their homes at a significant loss

\*Authorizes \$30 million for Impact Aid to help local educational agencies providing support to our military children, with an additional \$14 million for BRAC-affected areas and an additional \$5 million for military children with severe disabilities

Establishes an internship pilot program for military spouses to obtain employment with federal agencies to provide them with opportunities in careers that are portable as they move from military station to station.

#### Focusing on the War in Afghanistan

\*Requires reports to assess progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan and in Pakistan

\*Provides funds to train and equip the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)

\*Authorizes the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund to improve the capabilities of Pakistan's security forces, including Pakistan's military and Frontier Corps

\*Directs GAO to provide separate reports assessing the strategic plans for Iraq and Afghanistan

Iraq Policy Provisions

- \*Requires a report on the responsible redeployment of U.S. Forces from Iraq
- \*Provides authority to transfer equipment to bolster the Iraqi Security Forces

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